



Washington Student Financial Aid Programs

Background

Washington helps keep college affordable through state appropriations to public colleges and universities, and through direct aid to individual students. By paying about 60 percent of the cost of public higher education, the state can reduce the amount of tuition students pay. State student financial aid falls into one of three categories:

- ♦ Assistance to needy students (State Need Grant, State Work Study, and Educational Opportunity Grant)
- ♦ Rewarding merit (Washington Scholars and Washington Promise Scholarship)
- ♦ Targeted assistance (Health Professional Programs)

Nearly one-third of all Washington students – about 114,000 people – receives some form of direct aid from all sources (federal, state, and other). The Higher Education Coordinating Board administers the following state financial aid programs.

State Need Grant

State Need Grants help the state's lowest-income undergraduate students pursue degrees, hone skills, or retrain for new careers. To be eligible, a student's family income cannot exceed 55 percent of the state's median family income, which is about \$35,000, for a family of four. Students can use the grants at public two- and four-year colleges and universities and many accredited independent colleges, universities and career schools in Washington.

In fiscal year 2003, the program will use about \$105 million in state money and \$1 million in federal money to help over 49,000 students go to college. The average family income for dependent students was \$24,071 in 2000-2001. For self-supporting students, it was about \$12,631. Maximum grant amounts range from about \$1,900 to over \$4,000, depending on college costs.

State Work Study

Through part-time work, students from low- and middle-income families earn money for college while gaining experience whenever possible in jobs related to their academic and career goals. State Work Study provides an alternative to high levels of student borrowing. Students can attend public two- and four-year colleges and universities and many accredited independent four-year colleges and universities.

In fiscal year 2003, the program will use \$17.4 million in state money to help about 9,000 students go to college. Students earn, on average, between \$2,000 and \$5,000 per year. The average family income for dependent students was \$35,676 in 2000-2001. For self-supporting students, it was about \$11,816.

Washington Promise Scholarship

The Washington Promise Scholarship program provides college scholarships to low- and middle-income students in recognition of their academic achievements in high school.

Students must either rank in the top 15 percent of their senior classes or score at least 1,200 on the SAT or 27 on the ACT on the first attempt.

A student's family income cannot exceed 135 percent of the state's median family income. For 2002 graduates, that is about \$85,900 for a family of four. Students can use the scholarships at public two- and four-year colleges and universities and accredited independent colleges, universities and career schools in Washington. In fiscal year 2003, the program will use about \$6.3 million in state money to help about 6,700 students go to college. Students are eligible to receive up to \$948 this year.

Educational Opportunity Grant

This program provides \$2,500 grants to encourage financially needy, placebound students to complete a bachelor's degree. To be considered placebound, students must be unable to continue their education – without the assistance of this grant – due to family or work commitments, health concerns, financial need, or other similar factors. In addition, students must be Washington residents, live in one of 13 counties, and have completed only two years of college. Students can use the grants at all eligible four-year colleges and universities in Washington, except the UW and WSU branch campuses. In fiscal year 2003, the program will use about \$2.9 million in state money to help an estimated 1,000 students.

Health Professional Loan Repayment and Scholarship Programs

These programs were created to address the critical shortage of health care professionals statewide. The **Loan Repayment** program provides loan repayment assistance to licensed primary care health professionals. The **Scholarship** program provides scholarships to students training to become primary health care professionals. In return, participants in both programs agree to work in medically underserved areas or in health professional shortage areas in Washington. Students do not have to be state residents to apply.

Washington Scholars

This program honors the accomplishments of three high school seniors from each of the 49 state legislative districts. High school principals nominate the top 1 percent of their school's graduating senior class on the basis of academic achievement, leadership, and community service. Recipients receive scholarships of up to four years of public undergraduate resident tuition. The scholarships can be used at any Washington public or independent college or university. In fiscal year 2003, about 400 students will receive scholarships of about \$3,700.

Washington Award for Vocational Excellence (WAVE)

WAVE honors three vocational students from each of the 49 state legislative districts for outstanding achievement in vocational/technical education. High schools, skills centers, and community and technical colleges nominate students. Recipients receive grants, of up to two years of undergraduate resident tuition. Students can use the grants at public two- and four-year colleges and universities and accredited independent colleges, universities, and career schools in Washington.

Future Teachers Conditional Scholarship

This program was designed to encourage classified employees in public K-12 schools to become teachers by offering conditional scholarships. In return for school loans of up to \$4,000 per year, recipients agree to teach in Washington K-12 public schools. The state will forgive one year of the loan for every two years of teaching service or every one-year of service in a geographic or subject areas with a teacher shortage. State funding is available only for renewal awards for current recipients, not new applicants.

Conditional Scholarship for Alternative Teaching Certification

This program is designed to help school districts recruit teachers in subject matter and geographic areas with a teacher shortage. Classified instructional employees in K-12 public schools are eligible for loans of up to \$4,000 in exchange for teaching in Washington K-12 public schools. The state will forgive one year of the loan for every two years of teaching service. In 2001-2003, about 25 students will receive loans totaling \$100,000.

WICHE Student Exchange

Washington residents can enroll in eligible programs in 14 western states at reduced tuition rates through the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) student exchange program. The state allocated \$234,000 for the program in fiscal year 2003.

- ♦ ***Western Undergraduate Exchange***

Undergraduate students can enroll at participating two- and four-year colleges and universities. Students pay 150 percent of the receiving school's resident tuition, a significant savings over nonresident tuition.

- ♦ ***Western Regional Graduate Program***

Out-of-state graduate students can enroll in WICHE-designated graduate programs, and pay tuition at resident rates, at participating institutions.

- ♦ ***Professional Student Exchange***

Students can receive conditional loans to study optometry or osteopathy, two professional degree programs not offered in Washington. In return, participants agree to practice in a state shortage area. The state will forgive one year of the loan for every year of service with a minimum commitment of three years. Awards are available for up to four years. In 2002-2003, optometry students will receive awards of up to \$10,300 and osteopathy students will receive awards of up to \$15,100.